

by all 27 member states—we'll have new figures; we'll have new institutions more capable to affirm the role of a united Europe on the international scene.

Italy and Europe both must think there is possibilities for international security and peace for the cause of liberty and democracy. And the more Europe will be united and will be effective, I think the better we can reach these goals.

We cannot ask the United States to take care of our security. International security is a common duty, and Europe must be up to this challenge.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Glad you're here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Napolitano referred to Brig. Gen. Federico Bonato, Italian Army, commanding general, Regional Command Capital, NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

Statement on the Situation in Burma *December 11, 2007*

I am deeply disturbed by the report that U.N. Special Rapporteur Paulo Pinheiro released today in Geneva documenting his findings from his trip to Burma last month. It provides further alarming details about the Burmese authorities' crackdown on demonstrations by monks and democracy activists and the severe reprisals that continue today.

He describes how the regime harassed, detained, and killed many peaceful demonstrators. The Special Rapporteur received reports, for example, that a large number of bodies were burned September 27–30 at the Ye Way Crematorium.

I strongly condemn these actions and the junta's refusal to accept the need for real change in Burma. Even while Mr. Pinheiro was in Burma, the regime continued to arrest and harass monks and democracy activists. The regime has also closed down monasteries, including the Maggin Monastery in Rangoon that served as a hospice and treatment center for HIV/AIDS patients.

Mr. Pinheiro's report demonstrates why the world cannot go back to business as usual

with General Than Shwe and his junta. I call on all members of the international community to condemn the atrocities detailed in Mr. Pinheiro's report in the strongest possible terms. Last month, I announced new sanctions on the leaders of the regime and their cronies. Should the regime continue to ignore calls for a true democratic transition and the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, the United States is prepared to lead international efforts to place more sanctions on the regime. Laura and I will continue to stand with the Burmese people as they seek the freedom they deserve.

NOTE: The President referred to Senior Gen. Than Shwe, Chairman, State Peace and Development Council of Burma; and Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma.

Proclamation 8211—Wright Brothers Day, 2007

December 11, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The cause of discovery and exploration is a desire written in the human heart. On Wright Brothers Day, we remember the achievement of two young brothers on the Outer Banks of North Carolina whose persistence, skill, ingenuity, and daring revolutionized the world.

Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first manned, powered flight on December 17, 1903. Orville experienced the thrill of flight when he felt the first lift of the wing of the small wood and canvas aircraft that would travel 120 feet in 12 seconds. The brothers' passion and spirit of discovery helped define our Nation and paved the way for future generations of innovators to launch satellites, orbit the Earth, and travel to the Moon and back.

Our country is continuing the Wright brothers' great American journey. My Administration is committed to advancing space science, human space flight, and space exploration. We will continue to work to expand the horizons of human knowledge to ensure

that America is at the forefront of discovery for decades to come.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 143), has designated December 17 of each year as “Wright Brothers Day” and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 17, 2007, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:58 a.m., December 13, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 12, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 14.

Remarks on Presenting the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor

December 12, 2007

You know, one of the wonderful experiences of being a President is to welcome citizens who have served their communities with valor and compassion. And I—General and I are surrounded by four such gentlemen who have been heroic in their duties. They will tell you they were just doing their job; I’m telling you they did their job with extraordinary courage. And so it’s been an honor to award them this precious medal. And I want to thank you all very much for joining us. Proud to call you fellow citizens.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.

Statement on Signing the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007

December 12, 2007

Today I signed into law the “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007,” a bill to reauthorize Head Start. Over the past 40 years, Head Start has provided comprehensive child development services to more than 20 million low-income children and their families to promote school readiness. Because of the National Reporting System, we know that more Head Start programs are helping children gain early reading and math skills. But we must take steps to improve Head Start to ensure that low-income children arrive at school ready to learn.

I am pleased that this bill addresses several longstanding administration priorities, such as increased competition among Head Start providers, improved coordination of early childhood delivery systems, and stronger educational performance standards. Increasing competition for providers will help ensure that we offer the highest quality programs to our Nation’s most vulnerable young children. Greater collaboration among Head Start agencies, schools, and other programs serving young children will help ensure our investments are better aligned and more effective. Stronger educational performance standards and an emphasis on research-based curricula and classroom practices will increase children’s preparedness for school. I also support the bill’s provisions to strengthen fiscal accountability and program oversight, so that dollars intended to serve children are spent wisely.

I am, however, deeply disappointed that the bill ends the National Reporting System, our only tool to examine consistently how Head Start children are performing in programs across the Nation. We should be working to provide more and better data to parents, teachers, and policymakers, not less. I am concerned that the bill authorizes spending levels higher than those proposed in my budget. Approval of this legislation is not an endorsement of these funding levels or a commitment to request them. I am also disappointed that the bill fails to include my